

AFFAIR RECOVERY TIMES

MARCH 2006

THE FOUNDER'S CORNER

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SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:

- Over the Rainbow
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I Don't Think We're in Kansas Anymore, Toto

When it comes to affairs or sexual addiction, this statement couldn't be more true. Dorothy's life was a life of mediocrity. There was little or no color to her existence at the homestead, and she felt constrained by life's hardships and by those who had charge of her life. She believed that no one understood her. In frustration, she tried to leave, only to find herself directly in the path of an ominous tornado that sent her helplessly spinning into a strange new land of fantasy. Unlike her old life, this new life was painted with vibrant colors and was full of song. Furthermore, Dorothy was no longer alone. She found a strange troupe of friends leading the way: a scarecrow that lacked brains, a tin man missing his heart, and a lion with no courage. This motley crew committed their lives to assisting young Dorothy and her dog Toto in her search for the Wizard of

Oz. Interestingly, flying monkeys, wicked witches, and deception left Dorothy pining away for the very thing from which she had tried to run. She just wanted to be home again where she belonged.

I wonder if the author of the *Wizard of Oz* might not have been writing about some pitiful person trapped in an affair? How often do these indiscretions begin with feelings of mediocrity, or a desire to feel alive and understood, free from the constraints of life's responsibilities and no longer alone? And like Dorothy, the ambivalence generated by life's circumstances and frustrations often results in finding oneself in the wrong place at the wrong time. Catapulted into a strange new fantasyland, the individual is left to wrestle with what to do. Only then, they end up operating with a series of handicaps. Like Dorothy's team, they have no brain, no heart, and no courage.

How do you decide what to do when somebody has lost their brain? If you've ever observed someone in an affair, it is apparent they



Founder Rick Reynolds

are operating a few cards short of a full deck. They lose the ability to make even the most simplistic decisions. I have seen successful men and women in extremely influential positions transformed into inept and incompetent individuals who seem incapable of making a rational decision. They become willing to jeopardize career, family, and future for this momentary pleasure. If the behavior of being "in love" were not socially acceptable, they would be certifiably insane. Instead,

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HARBORING HOPE

In our continuing series of true stories of couples and their journey to recovery, we are proud to continue the story of Alex and Nita.

Alex's Story

If someone had asked me how my marriage was the day before Nita told me about the affair, I would have said that it was very, very, bad. I felt like I wasn't getting anywhere. I couldn't even get my wife to engage. So when Nita told me about the affair, somewhere in the back of my mind, it sort of made sense. I even had one of my friends ask me along time ago if I thought she was having an affair. So when she told me, it explained a lot.

I had a tremendous amount of hurt and I felt that there wasn't going to be any escape from it. Nita might dispute this but I felt I should be angrier than I was. I know I showed what she thought was a lot of anger, but I felt like I should be showing a lot more. I had no idea what this was going to mean. I didn't

see an easy solution to it that would have a happy ending. My thought was that this is the end of anything happy in my life.

I decided to be stubborn. I was not going to let this go down the tubes. I was committed to finding something good about this. It wasn't the way I wanted my life to be. Nita wasn't sure if she wanted to be in the marriage. It was four months before she really checked back in with me and those four months were excruciating. It was very upsetting to me that the world didn't give a damn. I still had to show up for work, had to pay my bills, feed my children, and feed myself. I felt like I was the one having all this pain and that nobody else was there with me. I had some really good friends who were willing to listen, but I felt I shouldn't over-extend my welcome. So I didn't talk to them every moment that I wanted to talk to somebody.

That's where God helped

a lot. Initially, when I didn't have any hope for anything positive, I could only look to Him and say, "Fix it." I can remember crying and just looking up to the sky through the window in my bedroom and saying, "I don't know what to do. Would You fix it somehow?"

Then Nita came back and it was as if she were saying, "Okay, I'll be stubborn with you. I don't know where we're going with this either but I agree with you. I'll be stubborn with you and we'll try to figure this out." And that's when we started coming to counseling with Affair Recovery.

During this time Nita said that she had no feelings for me. It felt like a giant hit in my stomach. It was humiliating. I felt like a lot of people wouldn't think I was a man if I didn't just walk out right then and there. But I still thought she loved me and that her feelings were just

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THE BULLETIN BOARD



The next EMS (Emergency Marital Services) weekend is March 24th-26th just a few weeks away, but there is still time to register. Call us or log on for more information, to register, or to request a brochure. Weekend lodging information is available.

The professionals at the Affair Recovery Center offer numerous seminars for groups and organizations. Call us or visit us online for a list of lengths and topics. We can also tailor a seminar or retreat to your needs.

THE FOUNDER'S CORNER (CONTINUED)

they are allowed to stumble through life like the emperor with no clothes. Everyone else can see they have no brain, and that reason and common sense are gone, but often they are too polite to say anything.

The loss of heart is also apparent. There is an illusion that if one is in love, they are finally in touch with their heart, when in reality they've just lost what little heart they had. The selfish pursuits of personal gratification and self-glorification have nothing to do with heart; rather they are based on self-centeredness. Like the tin man, the person involved in an affair has no heart and no empathy. People with heart actually care about the pain they are inflicting upon those they love. The total lack of consideration of how the betrayer's actions will impact others is one of the most astounding aspects of an affair. The path out of this dark morass definitely requires that they acquire a heart, not only to begin to experience awareness of the pain that's been inflicted, but also to learn how to truly

love.

Finally, courage is certainly not a term used to describe those indulging in affairs. In fact, their betrayal seems to rob them of courage. Instead of exercising the courage necessary to own their actions and acknowledge how they feel, or what they have decided to do, they hide behind a veil of secrecy, afraid of discovery and the consequences of their actions. Rather than having the courage to face the reality of the deficits in their marriage or address the issues resulting from their betrayal, they attempt to avoid conflict and to cover up. Ironically, it is this lack of courage that keeps them hopelessly trapped in the life they claim to want to escape. The only way they can stay immobilized in this state is by the continued avoidance of life's realities. Being honest would create immediate change, as well as a loss of control. It requires courage to actually take personal responsibility for their life and actions. Frequently, those lacking the courage to stand up will hide behind the rationalization

that they don't want to hurt their mate. In reality, however, they are controlling their mate by robbing them of the information necessary to take responsibility for their own life, to make informed decisions, and to address the issues in the marriage. It takes courage to be authentic in a marriage, but like the lion of Oz, courage is a trait that is sadly missing.

Interestingly, this trip to the fantasyland of an affair more often than not culminates in a longing for home. Like Dorothy, the person involved in an affair often realizes that "there's no place like home." But how do they return? It would be nice if they could click their heels together and repeat, "there's no place like home," but more is required. The journey back is more exciting, and ultimately more rewarding than the fantasyland, but it takes time and effort. It is, however, one's best hope for growth and happiness. Come back to reality. Rediscover your brain, heart and courage, and you'll find there truly is no place like home.



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Affair Recovery

A C O M M U N I T Y O F H O P E A N D H E A L I N G

HARBORING HOPE (CONTINUED)

covered up. I said to myself, "I know it's in there. I've seen it before. It's just under a pile of garbage right now."

Now I almost feel as if I got divorced and remarried to her. It's a completely different marriage. I look at old photos of us and it seems like a different couple.

I would tell others in this situation to not listen to what society tells you to do. Society says if your wife has an affair, the manly thing to do is to walk out the door and tell her where she can stick

the marriage.

However, I feel that the manliest thing to do is to say, "I want to stay in this marriage. And I'm going to do whatever it takes to get there." It doesn't matter to me. I want what's important and that is to stay married, work it out, and get to a better place.

I was a student pilot for a little while. When you fly a plane, you try to fly straight, but the wind is blowing you in one direction. If you look at the ground and try to fly

Affair Recovery Center is a community of counseling professionals and couples. Our professional counselors are dedicated to the restoration of marriages crippled by infidelity. Our organization includes numerous couples who have experienced the abundant blessings of reconciliation and renewal.

Our mission is to offer hope, support, and recovery for couples and individuals who have suffered the pain resulting from infidelity, betrayal, or sexual addiction.

straight, you end up all over the map. But if you look at the horizon and pick a spot way up on the horizon, you'll fly straight to it.

My encouragement and advice to couples is to both literally and figuratively look to God, and look on the horizon to where you want to be. Don't look at the mess you're in right now. And that goal is where I am today; where I love my wife and I'm happily married. There is a horizon and you'll get there. You just have to look way, way, ahead.

